

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Enclosed herewith is a corrected formal version of Figure 14. This corrected version of Figure 14 replaces the previous version of Figure 14. In corrected Figure 14, reference number 97 has been replaced with reference number 110.

REMARKS

Claims 22-42 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, claims 22-32 and 34-39 are amended, claims 33 and 40-42 are canceled without prejudice, and new 43 and 44 are added. Claims 22-32, 34-39, 43 and 44 are now pending in the application.

I. FORMAL MATTERS

A. The Drawings

The Office Action objects to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a) alleging that the drawings do not show multiple features recited in the claims. By this Amendment, certain claims have been canceled, and certain features have been removed from other pending claims. In view of these changes, it is respectfully submitted that the drawings now illustrate all features recited in the claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings under §1.83(a) is respectfully requested.

The Office Action also objects to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. §1.84(p)(4) because reference character 97 appears to designate two different elements in the drawings. By this Amendment, Applicants propose to correct Figure 14 to replace reference numeral 97 with new reference number 110. Corresponding changes are made to the specification. Accordingly, entry of corrected Figure 14 and withdrawal of the rejection under §1.84(p)(4) are respectfully requested.

B. The Specification

The Office Action objects to the specification on various grounds. Enclosed herewith is a Substitute Specification. The Substitute Specification is believed to correct each of the issues raised in the Office Action. Accordingly, entry of the Substitute Specification and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

C. The Claims

The Office Action objects to the claims on various grounds. In addition, the Office Action rejects claims 22-42 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly indefinite.

By this Amendment, claims 33 and 40-42 have been canceled. In addition, multiple changes have been made to the remaining claims to address the formality objections and the rejection under §112. In addition, Applicants wish to explain how some of the disclosed embodiments operate, and why the specification and drawings provide support for the claimed subject matter.

Claim 22 recites “means for selectively blocking movement of the closing member.” As also recited in claim 22, the blocking means can be moved between first and second positions. The first position is a “locked” position, wherein the blocking means blocks movement of a closing member. The second position is the “unlocked” position where movement of the closing member is not blocked.

In the embodiment illustrated in Figures 2-6, the closing member is identified with reference number 12. The closing member 12 is pivotally mounted around pivot axis 14. The “means for selectively blocking” includes, among other features, a locking head, which is identified by reference number 74. The locking head 74 is mounted on the end of a pivoted lever 75, which is itself mounted on a pivoted shaft 76.

Assume that the door lock is latched closed, as illustrated in Figure 3, and that the blocking means is located in the first (or locked) position. In this state, a first portion of the locking head 74 would be located within a recess of a portion of the door, a sidewall of the frame, or a control panel. In addition, a second portion of the locking head 74 would be located within a recess of the closing member 12, or it would be resting upon an edge of the closing member 12. If a user attempted to unlatch the door lock, by pulling upward on a gripping device 52, the gripping device 52 would apply a force to the closing member 12 that would tend to rotate the closing member in the clockwise direction. This, in turn, would cause the closing member 12 to apply a force to the second portion of the locking head 74, which is engaged with the closing member 12.

This force would tend to push the locking head toward the pivoted shaft 76 to which the locking head 74 is attached.

However, because the first part of the locking head 74 is also engaged with a recess on the door, sidewall or the control panel, the force exerted on the locking head will be transmitted through the locking head 74 to the recess on the door, sidewall or control panel. The blocking means is deliberately constructed in this manner, with a first portion of the locking head 74 engaged with the closing member and a second portion of the locking head 74 engaged with a recess on the door, frame or control panel so that the force exerted on the locking head by the closing member does not have to be withstood by the blocking means alone.

The Office Action also questioned whether the gripping device recited in claim 22 has any relationship to the handle or gripping shell recited in claims 31 and 35. In fact, these two elements are different from one another. The gripping device recited in claim 22 appears in the embodiment illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 as the element identified by reference number 52. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, rotational movements of the gripping device 52 can be used to urge the closing member 12 into an open position. In contrast, Figure 8 illustrates a gripping shell 93 which forms part of a handle which can be gripped by a user to open the door of an appliance.

In view of the changes to the claims, specification and drawings, and in light of the above explanations, withdrawal of the objection and the rejection are respectfully requested.

II. THE CLAIMS ARE ALLOWABLE OVER DIRNBERGER

The Office Action rejects claims 22-25, 28-32 and 34-42 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Dirnberger (German Patent Publication No. 19601228). As noted above, claims 40-42 have been canceled. With respect to the remaining claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 22 is directed to an electric household appliance which includes a receptacle for receiving items, a door permitting access to the receptacle and a

door lock for the door. Claim 22 recites that the door lock has a frame with an opening for a hook, a closing member moveably mounted in the frame and a closing spring disposed between the closing member and a counter-bearing in the frame. The door lock further includes a gripping device and a closing member which is connected to the gripping device. Claim 22 further recites a means for selectively blocking movement of the closing member, the blocking means being selectively positionable between a first position in which the blocking means blocks movement of the closing member and a second position in which the blocking means does not block movement of the closing member.

The Dirnberger reference discloses a latching or locking mechanism which includes a moving or rotatable latching member 84 which is rotatably mounted on a moveable door 86. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, when the door of an appliance is closed, the door and moveable lock mechanism move from the position shown in Figure 5 to the position shown in Figure 6.

The Office Action asserts that the element identified with reference numeral 84 corresponds to the claimed hook, and that the item identified with reference numeral 12 corresponds to the claimed closing member. The Office Action further asserts that the handle 92 shown in Figure 5 of Dirnberger corresponds to the claimed gripping device. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 22 recites a closing member which is connected to the recited gripping device. Following the logic set forth in the Office Action, this would require that the handle 92 shown in Figure 5 of Dirnberger (corresponding to the claimed gripping device) be connected to the element identified with reference numeral 12 in Dirnberger (corresponding to the claimed closing member). Clearly, these elements are not connected. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 22 is allowable over Dirnberger.

Claims 23-25, 28-32 and 34-39 depend from claim 22 and are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above. The dependent claims also recite additional features which are also not shown in the references of record.

For instance, claim 24 recites that the means for selectively blocking movement comprises a locking head, and that when the means is in the first position, the locking head is inserted in a recess of a portion of the door, a sidewall of the frame or a control panel such that any forces applied to the locking head are transferred to the recess. The logic of this arrangement is discussed above.

In the Dirnberger reference, the element which would correspond to the claimed locking head is identified with reference number 14. As shown in Figure 2 of Dirnberger, when element 14 is in a first position it blocks movement of element number 12, which corresponds to the claimed closing member. When element 14 is moved to the position illustrated in Figure 1, element 14 no longer blocks movement of the closing member 12. However, at no time is element 14 inserted into a recess of the door, sidewall, or control panel so that forces applied to element 14 are transmitted to the recess. Certainly when element 14 is located in the position shown in Figure 2, which would correspond to the claimed blocking means being in the first position, element 14 is not engaged with a recess in a frame, door or control panel. It is respectfully submitted that claim 24 is also allowable for these additional reasons.

Claim 28 recites that the blocking means comprises a locking head fixed to a pivoted shaft by means of a pivoted lever so that the locking head can execute a rotary motion between the first position and the second position. As described above, the element in Dirnberger which would correspond to the claimed locking head is element number 14. This element traces out a translational movement in a direct line. Element 14 never makes any type of pivoting movement when it moves between the position shown in Figure 1 and the position shown in Figure 2. It is respectfully submitted that claim 28 is also allowable for these additional reasons.

Claim 29 depends from claim 28 and is allowable for the additional reasons discussed above in connection with claim 28. Claim 29 further recites that the means for selectively blocking also includes a spring acting against a restoring lever to apply a restoring moment to the pivoted shaft, so that the means for selectively blocking is biased towards the first position with the child safety features activated. In contrast, in the

Dirnberger mechanism, a spring 54 biases element number 14 towards the open position shown in Figure 1 of Dirnberger, not the closed position shown in Figure 2. It is respectfully submitted that claim 29 is also allowable for these additional reasons.

Claims 35 and 36 depend from claim 22 and recite that the means for selectively blocking further comprises an actuating lever and that the actuating lever is pressed into the first position by a spring. As noted above, the spring in the Dirnberger mechanism does not push the actuating lever (element 14) into the first (locked) position, but rather into the second, unlocked position. It is respectfully submitted that claims 35 and 36 are also allowable for these additional reasons.

In view of all the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 22-25, 28-32 and 34-39 is respectfully requested.

III. CLAIMS 22 AND 27 ARE ALLOWABLE

The Office Action rejects claims 22 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Nozomu (U.S. Patent No. 3,799,596), in view of Dirnberger. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 22 and 27 are allowable over Dirnberger for all the reasons discussed above. The Nozomu reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Dirnberger noted above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 22 and 27 over Nozomu and Dirnberger, is respectfully requested.

IV. CLAIM 26 IS ALLOWABLE

The Office Action rejects claim 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Dirnberger, in view of Devereaux (U.S. Patent No. 2,046,612). Claim 26 depends from claim 22 and is allowable over Dirnberger for all the reasons discussed above. Devereaux fails to cure the deficiencies of Dirnberger. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 26 is respectfully requested.

V. CLAIM 33 IS ALLOWABLE

The Office Action rejects claim 33 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Dirnberger, in view of Buckner (U.S. Patent No. 5,312,143). Claim 33 depends from claim 22 and is allowable over Dirnberger for all the reasons discussed above. Buckner fails to cure the deficiencies of Dirnberger. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 33 is respectfully requested.

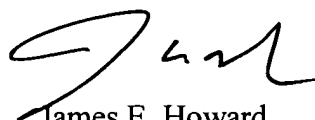
VI. NEW CLAIMS 43 AND 44

By this Amendment, claims 43 and 44 are added to the application. These claims depend from claim 22 and are allowable for all the reasons discussed above in connection with claim 22, and for the additional features which they recite.

VII. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 22-32, 34-39, 43 and 44 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Howard', written over the printed name.

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May 4, 2009

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